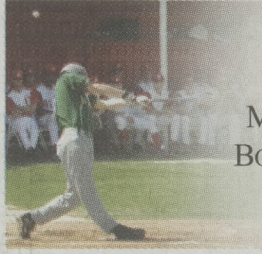




SECURITY OR INVASTION  
OF PRIVACY?  
IS THE NSA OVERSTEPPING  
ITS BOUNDARIES?



BODY LANGUAGE  
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THROUGH THE NIGHT.



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# VALLEY STAR

THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE

VOLUME 64, ISSUE NO. 10

MAY 24, 2006

It's YOUR Newspaper

## Graduation Marks New Beginning for Many

BY MAGGIE OWNBEY  
OPINION EDITOR

As Valley College's graduating class of 2006 prepares for the road ahead, they can look back with pride at the hard work and dedication it took to reach their goals. Friends and family all over the world will also be able to join in on the celebration, as a live Web cast of the ceremony will be on Valley's web site.

"Look at the word commencement, it's the beginning of something new," said Tino Manzano, the dean of enrollment management. "It marks a beginning and highlights the people who work so hard."

This year's graduation ceremony, 'Building for the Future,' will be held on June 7 and will be the first event in Valley's newly renovated Monarch Stadium. The live Web cast will also be the first of its kind in the nine-campus Los Angeles Community College District.

"If [students' families] can't make it here they will be able to see their loved ones graduate," said Deborah Harrington, the Writing Center director who brought the idea to Valley.

"It's definitely the best day of the year," said Sherri Rodriguez, the associate dean of Student Services and chair of the commencement committee. "We try to encourage faculty to go out and support the students and enjoy the celebration."

The work for more involvement in the event across Valley has helped increase its attendance.

"It's a huge celebration," said Manzano, a member of the commencement committee. "The [faculty on] campus comes together."

The L.A. Valley String Quartet will play the procession march, Students Brian K. Smith and Carol Rodriguez will perform the National Anthem as a duet and Lusine Marukyan will play a violin solo of "Winter" from Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" as an interlude. The student speak-

see 'Graduation' page 2



**BENDING OVER BACKWARDS** - Dancers face the audience during "Romp," a dance number choreographed by Sharon Jakubecy, at the Valley College 2006 Spring Concert titled "Body Language" at the Mainstage Theater on May 19 and 20.

ARTAK AYZAYAN / VALLEY STAR  
See Valley Life, page 4

## Instructor's Arrest Prompts No-Confidence Vote at Mission

BY JESUS ESQUIVEL  
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

Mission College interim President Jose Leyba has asked the campus sheriff's department to investigate the arrest of a college instructor.

Leyba announced the investigation at a recent senate meeting where board members gave a 19-1 vote of no confidence to Joe Ramirez, vice president of student affairs.

Former district lawyer Martha Turgow said, "There have been a tremendous number of claims filed." Claims alluding to harassment, and discrimination of race and ethnicity.

The arrest for obstructing a peace officer and disturbance within a community college building left 67-year-old Mission College founder Charles Dirks with bruises

see 'Mission' page 2

## 2005-2006 ASU Term Wraps Up

BY WILL REYES  
STAFF WRITER

The 2005-2006 Valley College Associated Student Union term is coming to a close, as the executive board held its last meeting Tuesday May 16, after an active year that saw them bring in new services, events and projects for Valley students.

ASU President Nelli Martirosyan said the commitment to student service was a welcome one for and her board, as they established successful new projects like the ASU Book Exchange, Lobby Committee, bulletin boards, Earth Day and more.

"I really enjoyed both serving and leading the student body," said Martirosyan. "I believe that [this ASU] set a strong example and also set very high standards. I am extremely proud of what we did."

This was the first ASU board to create programs like the Book Exchange, which gives Valley

students the opportunity to buy and sell used books to each other at low costs, and the Lobby Committee, a program set up to allow politically active students the chance to lobby state and federal government for their causes. The current ASU's work has earned them the praise of many, including Valley's administration.

"This is the best ASU in the 10 years I've been here," said Yasmin Delahoussaye, the vice president of Student Services. "You rarely see a combination of both a good president and a good board working together to execute, and this group did that."

Sherri A. Rodriguez, the associate dean of Student Services who serves as the ASU advisor, was also pleased with the results of this year's board.

"I think [this ASU] is by far the most productive board we've had," said Rodriguez. "They set a really high standard by estab-

see 'ASU' page 2

### VALLEY PEOPLE

## Martirosyan Moves On, Looks Back

BY WILL REYES  
STAFF WRITER

Passion and dedication are important values for Associated Student Union President Nelli Martirosyan, whose 2005-2006 term is nearing its end, after plenty of groundbreaking achievements and a profound impact on many at Valley College.

"The reason I decided to run for the ASU presidency was because I had a vision and was sure I could lead the ASU toward a difference," said the energetic Martirosyan. "All I have been interested in to this day is an officer's passion, dedication and commitment to the ASU work ... I feel proud that [this ASU] will be remembered as an ambitious group of people who worked very hard to make a difference."

Martirosyan, a student at Valley for two and a half years, served in the student government for two, one as the inter-club council representative and her final year as the leader of an ASU board that established new programs and leaves behind a solid foundation for better serving Valley students.

"I am extremely happy with what me and my board have accomplished," Martirosyan said. "When I look back on my two terms in the [ASU] there is no single second I regret."

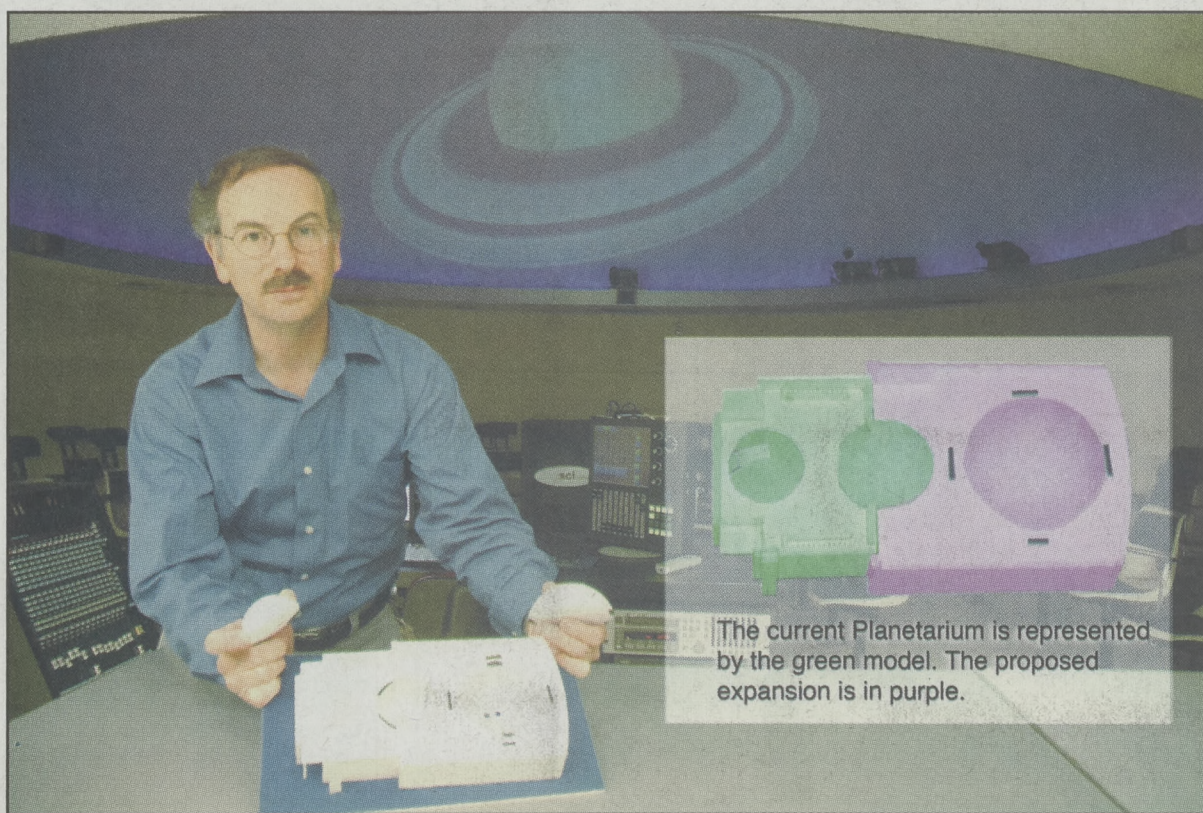
The 24-year-old Martirosyan was able to take both ideas of her own and from past ASUs and



MARIA LOW / VALLEY STAR  
**PRESIDENTIAL EXIT** - Outgoing ASU President Nelli Martirosyan leaves a legacy at Valley College.

see them through to completion. Her work ethic transferred over to her entire board and fueled the ASU Book Exchange, genocides memorial, a

see 'Martirosyan' page 2



MARIA LOW AND LAGINA PHILLIPS / VALLEY STAR PHOTO ILLUSTRATION  
**MODEL BEHAVIOR** - Planetarium Director David Falk demonstrates how the Planetarium's expansion would benefit students. The expansion, however, has been on the back burner due to rising construction costs, bond management officials say.

## Planetarium Expansion Shelved

BY LAGINA PHILLIPS  
MANAGING EDITOR

The Valley College Planetarium was slated to receive an expansion that would adequately accommodate students and community members, but has now been categorized as "unfunded."

Under the ReVitalizing Valley project, funded by Propositions A and AA, the campus Planetarium, which acts as a classroom to all 11 astronomy courses, was going to receive a new wing that would include a dome 40 feet in diameter, nearly twice the size of the current cramped 24-foot dome.

"They don't even build them that small anymore," said David Falk, director of the Planetarium. While appreciative of the small changes the

facility will receive, including refurbished chairs and an exterior elevator to allow disabled persons to access the roof, Falk is disappointed that the Prop A/AA money doesn't cover the Planetarium's planned expansion, new Observation Deck and state-of-the-art Planetarium Projection System; "Since the passage of Prop A ... five years ago, the most change I've seen with the Planetarium is a new coat of paint."

Under a NASA grant the Planetarium received in 2003, which funded a new telescope, it is required to host public shows and give tours to elementary schools, such as the third grade class from Erwin Street Elementary that visited Friday. The third grade class' arrival forced an astronomy class being taught in the Planetarium to move to another location

because of the structure's maximum capacity of 50 people.

"I'm not sure we can serve students and the community as well as we should," said Falk.

The new dome would accommodate more than 100 people in addition to the smaller 50-seat dome, which Falk said would make it possible to teach two classes at once or teach one class while a tour is given.

"You can only do so much with the money you have," said Robert Dieken, bond manager for URS, the company overseeing Valley's construction. "The only reason [the Planetarium expansion] is not on the books is because of rising costs."

Those interested in donating to the "Chairs for Stars" fund, which will raise money for the expansion, can do so through the Patron's Association in Administration 100.



'ASU'

continued from page 1

lishing things like the Book Exchange and bulletin boards."

The ASU bulletin boards are a project being left at Valley as a permanent means of educating students on the work of their student government. Dedicated solely to the work of the ASU, the boards will be placed in 15 buildings to inform students of events and how to apply for student government. The project was unanimously supported by the College Council at the beginning of the spring semester and will be completed by the end of this ASU's term.

"This is one of the biggest legacies we are leaving behind," said Martirosyan. "So many students don't come and go to the [Campus Center] building to learn about the ASU. So, this way we are going to reach thousands of students all

over Valley's campus."

Rodriguez credits the completion of so many projects and the high standards of this ASU to the dedication of Martirosyan and the ASU commissioners.

"Nelli was a taskmaster," Rodriguez said. "And the board really came together to implement events and be supportive of each other until the very end."

With them handing the ASU offices over to the new board on June 8 and their term officially finishing on June 30, the current ASU is making sure to leave behind blueprints on how to organize all of this year's successful projects. "This year's board is a great resource for next year's board," said Davis, the commissioner of campus and environmental affairs. "[The next ASU] already has the infrastructure in place; it is now their challenge to do something great with it."

Day And Date of Final Exam	MONDAY June 5, 2006		
Time of Exam	6:30-8:30	9:30-11:30	12:30-2:30
Class Schedule	6:30-7:55 MW	9:40-10:50 MTWTh	1:00-2:10 MTWTh
	6:45-7:55 MTWTh	9:40-11:05 MW	1:00-2:25 MW
		9:40-10:55 MWF	1:00-2:15 MWF

Day And Date of Final Exam	WEDNESDAY May 31, 2006		
Time of Exam	8:00-10:00	10:30-12:30	1:00-3:30
Class Schedule	8:15-9:25 MTWTh	11:20-12:30 MTWTh	2:20-3:30 MTWTh
	8:00-9:25 MW	11:20-12:45 MW	2:40-4:05 MW
	8:00-9:15 MWF	11:20-12:35 MWF	

Day And Date of Final Exam	TUESDAY May 30, 2006		
Time of Exam	6:30-8:30	9:30-11:30	12:30-2:30
Class Schedule	6:30-7:55 TTh	9:40-11:05 TTh	1:00-2:25 TTh
		9:40-10:55 TThF	1:00-2:15 TThF

Day And Date of Final Exam	THURSDAY June 1, 2006		
Time of Exam	8:00-10:00	10:30-12:30	1:00-3:00
Class Schedule	8:00-9:25 TTh	11:20-12:45 TTh	1:45-3:10 TTh
	8:00-9:15 TThF	11:20-12:35 TThF	1:45-3:00 TThF

Evening Classes will be held on the following dates:

Monday classes: June 5, Tuesday: May 30, Wednesday: May 31, Thursday: June 1, Friday: June 2

'Graduation'

continued from page 1

ers will be Sima Hakobyan and Felicia Parazaidar.

Los Angeles City Controller Laura Chick, a Valley alumna, will be this year's keynote speaker. Chick was the first and only woman to hold a citywide office in Los Angeles when she was elected on April 10, 2001.

LACCD Board of Trustee Mona Field will confer the Degree.

Valley President Tyree Wieder will greet each candidate as they cross the stage and move their tassel to the other side of their cap — a symbol that marks the culmination of lessons and experiences each person will take on their individual journeys beyond graduation.

"I am leaving Valley having numerous good memories and thoughts in my mind and heart that [in] no way will ever be erased," said Associated Student Union President Nelli Martirosyan, who plans to attend UC Berkeley this fall.

Commencement 2006 will be in Monarch Stadium Wednesday, June 7, at 4:30 p.m., with the reception immediately following in the parking lot adjacent to the stadium, complete with balloons, tents and trees for the festivities.

The event will be sponsored by Valley College and The Associated Student Union and more information on this year's commencement can be found at [www.lavc.edu](http://www.lavc.edu)

'Mission'

continued from page 1

to his arm and head, handcuff cuts around his wrists and a torn calf muscle that has crippled his left leg from below the knee, according to Dirks.

The events initiated on April 26, when Ramirez explained at an Associated Student Organization (ASO) meeting that student elections would be postponed for violation of certain ASO rules. Student and campus cadet, Yesenia Franco, voiced her disapproval at the meeting. The next day she was asked to come into the sheriff's office.

"She was in tears because of being ordered to come in to be interrogated about the ASO meeting the day before," Dirks wrote in a letter he sent to Mission College students, staff and faculty on May 8.

According to Dirks' letter, there was a heated discussion between him and the sheriff that fired Franco from her cadet position. Dirks and Franco were ordered to leave.

"They just attack me without provocation or warning," Dirks wrote in his letter. "The Sheriff cadet cries out to her fellow Sheriffs: 'You guys can't do that, you can't do that. What are you guys doing?'" Scared and terrorized, I cry out

futilely: 'Help, help, brutality, brutality.'"

Sheriffs refused to comment on the matter due to the ongoing investigation, but made reference to County Sheriffs Department Community Colleges Bureau, Detective Richard Roberts who didn't respond to repeated calls.

"There are video-tapes that show the brutality that happened, while Joe Ramirez stands by with a smirk on his face," said Franco during an open forum discussion at a senate meeting on May 4.

President Leyba told the San Fernando Valley Sun that the sheriff's office has the video tape of the incident and the arresting officer is not working on campus until the investigation is completed. Joe Ramirez received a vote of no confidence Thursday by the Mission College Faculty Senate, along with 450 student signatures asking for his removal, which pushes the administration to remove Ramirez, who was put on administrative leave after the Dirks skirmish.

In a related incident, eight sheriff's office officials escorted former ASO secretary, Lorena Lopez to Ramirez's office where she had her tapes of the April 26 ASO meeting taken away and altered, according to Lopez.

"Joe Ramirez told me I

have no right to keep those tapes." Lopez said at the senate meeting. "I was intimidated but I asked him to sign a paper saying he would not mess with the tapes."

Mission's troubles go back to 2002, when Chicano studies instructor and Social Science Department Chair John Morales took the chair position. Turgow said there was a petition signed by faculty and staff of that department saying that they did not want a full-time Chicano studies instructor to be the department chair.

Morales had cut many transfer curriculums but never touched any courses in the Chicano studies department during his tenure. "While other classes were cut, Chicano studies grew uncharacteristi-

cally," said current social science department Chair, Harlan Goldberg.

There are now 14 Chicano studies courses available at Mission, and two African American studies classes; Valley has six African American studies classes and seven Chicano studies classes.

Rodriguez said he was looking at public records of the elections in the campus writing center when Ramirez walked by and snatched the documents from him. Claiming the election was under investigation and the documents shouldn't be circulating.

Now the faculty senate has tabled the decision to establish a separate department of Chicana and Chicano studies, the decision will be made at the

next senate meeting on June 1 at Mission College.

In address to the establishment of the department EOP&S director and MEChA advisor Jose Luis Ramirez said, "If we were in Glendale we would support Armenian studies, or if we were in Harbor College we would support African American studies, that is just something for you to think about while making your decision."

Leyba will leave the campus on June 30 to return to his family in Arizona. He told the Sun in a recent interview, "The college needs and deserves a permanent president that can handle a long tenure...This is the person we want to lead the institution when tough decisions need to be made."

'Martirosyan'

continued from page 1

Hurricane Katrina fundraiser that raised \$2,400 for victims and much more.

"Nelli's passion is contagious and I truly feel that she led by example," said Rachel Davis, the commissioner of campus and environmental affairs. "The things we accomplished were as a result of teamwork, but a team is nothing without good leadership. She never asked any of us to do more than she was willing to do herself."

Public service is nothing new to Martirosyan, who has also been on the board of directors for the organization Yerkir USA, whose mission is to build and repair services in Armenia. As a member of the board, she's organizing a beneficiary concert this August to raise \$24,421 to rebuild a school in a village in Armenia.

"My biggest goal in life is to serve Armenia," said the Armenian-born Martirosyan. "I don't believe that my life is only about me, I feel happy seeing people benefit from what I do."

Finishing her time at Valley, she credits the college's resources and staff for her success, specifically the support of her counselor Richard Brossman.

"When I came to Valley I didn't even know what a G.P.A. or transferrable classes were," said Martirosyan, who moved to America six years ago. "Now it's two and a half years later and I'm going to Berkeley! [Brossman] guided me through every step and I feel my time at Valley prepared me very well."

Having been accepted to UC Berkeley and majoring in political science, Martirosyan says her main goal is to do well academically and then continue her involvement in public service, before returning to Armenia.

"After I earn my Ph.D I want to go back to Armenia and do everything I can to help the country move forward," said Martirosyan.

Now that she's finalizing this chapter of her life, she says she's proud of what she has done and eager to reach to new heights, with the backing of her family and friends.

"I'm very appreciative of my parents," said Martirosyan.

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CALL FOR ENTRIES

Logo Identity Design Competition

hosted by the Greater Valley Glen Council  
Deadline for submission is June 9, 2006

Attention high school and college level students who live, study or work in Greater Valley Glen!

You are invited to participate in our logo design competition, designing its first ever logo identity.

Theme: The council is looking for an inclusive logo design that depicts the community of Greater Valley Glen, focusing on its civic diversity.

The Greater Valley Glen Council is elected by the stakeholders in the Greater Valley Glen area to serve as a neighborhood advisory board to the Los Angeles City government. We are volunteer homeowners, renters, business people and representatives from schools, churches and non-profit groups. Our goals include, but are not limited to, improving public safety and protecting the quality of life in our neighborhood.

The office of Councilmember Wendy Greuel, Council District 2 will award the winner with a Certificate of Achievement.

Guidelines are available on the web at:  
[www.greatervalleyglen.org](http://www.greatervalleyglen.org) or [www.GVGC.us](http://www.GVGC.us)  
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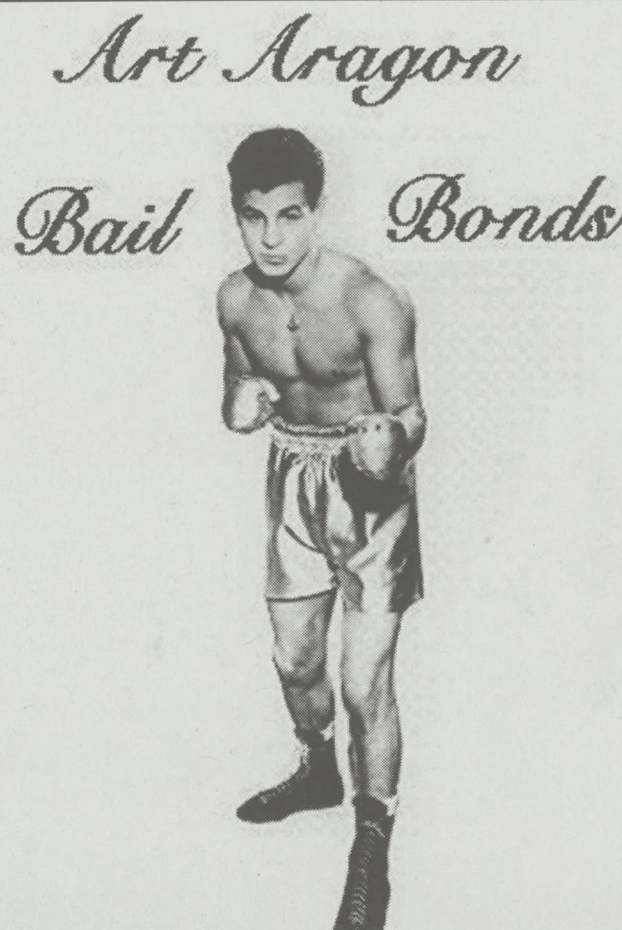
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# OPINION

3

## ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

EACH WEEK, THE VALLEY STAR EXAMINES AN ISSUE FROM TWO SIDES. THIS WEEK:  
IS THE GOVERNMENT PROTECTING OUR FREEDOM OR TAKING IT AWAY?

### In the Interest of National Security

BY MARC HOWARD  
STAFF WRITER

To put it simply, we live in a time of war; and when you live in a time of war the fact is that you have to be prepared to give up some of your liberties in the interest of safety.

This is all the more true in America's case, fighting an enemy that operates beneath a cloak. The enemy is among us; he or she could be anyone we pass on the street and our government must be provided with every available tool in order to roust these people from their hiding places.

Two weeks ago, USA Today reported that Verizon, AT&T and BellSouth had been providing the National Security Agency with customer phone records since 2001, after the 9/11 attacks.

The article said that Qwest Communications had been approached by the NSA and denied its request because it apparently violated the privacy law.

This is ridiculous.

It appears to me that the privacy law does not apply to those who communicate and collaborate with terrorists; if it does, it shouldn't.

"Everything that the agency has done has been lawful. It's been briefed to the appropriate members of congress," said Gen. Michael Hayden, former NSA head and presidential nominee for Central Intelligence Agency director. "The only purpose of the agency's activities is to preserve the security and the liberty of the American people."

So what's wrong with that?

Lawmakers from both sides of the party line have questioned the merit and prudence of the surveillance program. Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter, R-Pa., plans on calling the companies to appear before the Senate in order to get a better understanding of how the program is being conducted.

"We're really flying blind on the subject and that's not a good way to approach the Fourth Amendment," Specter said of domestic surveillance in general.

House Majority Leader John Boehner, R-Ohio, isn't

satisfied with the limited information he has on the program. "I'm not sure why it would be necessary to keep and have that kind of information," said Boehner.

It makes perfect sense that Mr. Boehner would not



ILLUSTRATION BY JESUS ESQUIVEL / VALLEY STAR

understand the importance of keeping these records since he is not in the business of hunting terrorists - The NSA is. I believe that it would be in the best interest of every American if congress and the NSA kept to doing their respective jobs. I think it makes sense to allow counterterrorism experts to decide what are appropriate counterterrorism tactics.

"Everything that NSA does is lawful and very carefully done," Hayden said. "The appropriate members of the Congress, the House and Senate are briefed on all NSA activities."

That is good enough for me.

I wonder whether the critics of the NSA have noticed that since 9/11 there have been no further attacks on the U.S.

### Presidential Power Stretches too Far

BY SEDA TERZYAN  
STAFF WRITER

Fear, uncertainty and war have become America's primary colors since the 9/11 terrorist attacks slammed through its seemingly impenetrable walls.

■ Make your voice heard! Participate in the online poll at [www.lavalleystar.com](http://www.lavalleystar.com)

assembled," according to USA Today.

The controversy about the phone companies is diverting attention from the real villains, the executive branch of the government, which is stretching its power and with it can do just about anything if unchallenged.

President George W. Bush later acknowledged that he had authorized covert NSA operations and responded by telling reporters that the NSA is "not mining or trolling through the personal lives of millions of innocent Americans."

Consider that just last December, the New York Times revealed that the NSA had eavesdropped on thousands of phone calls between the U.S. and foreign countries without warrants. This progressed further when USA Today uncovered more to the story with the NSA's database of billions of calls made inside the U.S. When Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., asked Gen. Michael Hayden, former head of the NSA, before and after 9/11, "Is that the whole program?"

Hayden, Bush's top choice for head of the CIA, responded, "I'm not at liberty to talk about that in open session."

"I have substantial questions about his credibility," said Senate Intelligence Committee member Ron Wyden, pointing out Hayden's previous public statements that the NSA monitored only international calls. "There was never any mention of establishing a domestic database."

If people like Hayden and Bush believe that phone tapping is justified, then why so much secrecy?

Sadly, 63 percent of Americans are not asking the right questions and believe phone tapping to be justified or are unbothered by it, according to an ABC News/ Washington Post Poll.

The constitution was not written to hold only in times of peace. Its purpose is to protect the people from the government abusing its power during times of fear.

This war can go on for decades with no resolution, but with growing fear and loss of freedom.

Checks and balances are disappearing and if this continues, the extended powers of the executive branch could take root and become permanent, marking the end of democracy.

Now, it seems as if the U.S. Constitution should be re-written to match up with the dark, post-9/11 world.

The government convinced Americans during a time of vulnerability that certain freedoms must be surrendered to ensure a successful victory against "the war on terror."

Five years later we find out that the Bush administration ordered the National Security Agency to tap phone calls and monitor e-mails going in and out of the country, without the approval of the courts, congress, or the people. This past week the nation also learned that Verizon, AT&T and Bell South illegally handed over the phone records of millions of Americans to help the NSA, who approached the companies in 2001 after 9/11, amassing one of the "largest databases ever

#### AN OPINION

## Don't Defer Darfur

■ Three years into the crisis and peace talks are still in a no-fly zone.

BY MARCO ELORREAGA  
STAFF WRITER

The crisis in Darfur is something I knew about peripherally. Then I received a "Save Darfur!" flier at USC and that was enough for a rude awakening: This has to stop.

For three years, there have been deaths upon deaths, reaching well around 400,000 while more than two million have been displaced in the name of violence and power.

It began when two rebel groups, Sudan Liberation Movement/Army and the Justice and Equality Movement, attacked military installations over disputes about land and water resources. The Sudanese government recruited the Janjaweed militias as a result — the government denies the claim that it supported these groups — to remove any disloyal civilian.

As the conflict continued between Janjaweed militias and rebel groups, civilians and dissidents in non-Arab villages faced atrocities such as torched villages and dismemberment, sexual assault or rape, beatings and murders while Arab villages were left alone, according to a U.N. interagency report that came out in April, 2004. Diseases and malnutrition were prominent among the weakened people who were displaced and had inadequate shelter.

Last Tuesday, the Security Council passed a resolution finally allowing U.N. peacekeepers, an estimate of 20,000 soldiers, to enter the region and protect civilians from these violent militia groups as they return home. Even though a peace resolution was reached, it was only signed by the Sudanese government and the SLA, meaning two other rebel groups are not in agreement.

The Sudanese government is also very reluctant about some of the provisions agreed upon, mainly on the transfer of force from African Union troops to U.N. troops. It has been estimated that the U.N. will gain full control by September.

#### STAFF EDITORIAL

## Education Lost in a Cloud of Political Smoke

Somewhere in America today a student will be turned away from crucial financial assistance while pursuing an education.

One in every 400 students that apply for federal financial aid in this country is rejected due to criminal convictions.

What are the heinous crimes that prevent potential college students from furthering their life through education? Murder? Rape? The answer is neither.

Drug convictions have led to the denial of financial assistance to more than 189,000 students since the 2000-01 school year, according to a study of Department of Education numbers by an independent drug policy overhaul group, when an amendment to the Higher Education Act that made convicted drug offenders ineligible for aid took effect.

The legislation was authored by Rep. Mark Souder, R-Ind. a Republican from Indiana, whose state has the highest rate of rejections, with one in every 200 deemed ineligible. Twelve other states, including California are above the national average for denying aid.

"The American taxpayer should not be subsidizing the educations of those students who are convicted of dealing or using illegal drugs," said Souder in a statement in April.

Although this problem is not in our backyards like a certain immigration situation, it should be given due attention from local communities and schools, not only in Washington D.C., where on April 30 many protested the lackadaisical action of our government.

MtvU and StandFast united to create a short documentary with one of the refugees and there is an online game called "Darfur is dying" that chronicles the life of a refugee family living in the hell that is their home at [www.darfurisdying.com](http://www.darfurisdying.com).

During the month of April, the Armenian genocide was remembered in full-blown capacity with a lavishly beautiful memorial on the Valley College quad, which culminated in a night-long vigil with candle lights. On April 25, the Holocaust Remembrance Day took place remembering more than 10 genocides, but what about the NOW?

To remember is great, but to honor and respect the victims of such horrific acts is all in vain if nothing is done to stop it from happening again. Valley needs to step up to the plate with Darfur and clubs like Students for Peace and the Hillel should bring awareness throughout the year.

If activism were to be equated at Valley, all one has to do is to find the square root of the negative amount of students who give a hoot — the answer would be  $i$ : imaginary. What's wrong should be wrong universally and one shouldn't choose his or her battles in accordance to how it will benefit them.

I can't understand how thousands will protest against the criminalization of illegal immigration or the war in Iraq, shouting "No le vamos!" or "Out of Iraq! Unconditionally! Immediately!" and ignore the dehumanization that has been going on for three years in Darfur.

Valley students: You are perpetuating genocide with your selective apathy. I'm the first to admit I am not doing my part, are you?

To get involved visit [www.savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org) or [www.standnow.org](http://www.standnow.org).

## Campus View

PHOTOS BY ARTAK AYVAZIAN

Is the National Security Agency violating civil liberties by requesting the phone records of American citizens?



"No one has the right to invade our privacy, it goes against the constitution and this might just be the beginning."

-Mako Ibuski  
Undecided



"Randomly screening the calls of innocent people is a violation of our civil rights."

-Nikki Mazerant  
Computer Science



"It's hard to stop terrorism. The government has to have the ability to spy on those that might compromise others. It seems as if the media is just squeezing Bush, it's not what the government is doing, it's who's doing it."

-Reyn Mercuri  
Art



"When things like 9/11 happen the government has to do something, but they should only go after suspicious people, not everyone."

-Sona Mamikonian  
Science



WEDNESDAY  
TO TUESDAY

Wednesday, May 24

**LAVC Jazz Ensemble;**  
**Woody James,**  
 director Music  
 Room 112 Valley  
 College Free /  
 11:30 a.m.

**Dr. John Klotz** closes the  
 Spring 2006  
 Science Seminar  
 Series with a  
 presentation on  
 "Toxicity and  
 Animal Bites" Valley College  
 Mainstage Theater 7 p.m.

**Brian Posehn** ("Mr. Show,"  
 and "Comedians  
 of Comedy")  
 meet and greet  
 at Golden Apple  
 Comics 7711  
 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles  
 (323) 658-6047 6 p.m.- 8  
 p.m.

Thursday, May 25

**Dan Douke: A Sweet Ride,**  
 last chance to  
 catch this exhibit  
 at the Valley  
 College Art  
 Gallery 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and  
 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Ice Cream Social and  
 Recognition  
 Ceremony**  
 Valley College  
 Cafeteria  
 Conference Room  
 1:30 p.m.

**A special Say the Word :**  
**The Ish Factor**  
 at Skirball  
 Cultural Center  
 original comedy  
 readings by Beth Lapidés,  
 Kevin Rooney ("Politically  
 Incorrect"), Cindy Chupack  
 ("Sex and the City"), Rob  
 Cohen ("The Simpsons"),  
 and Stephen Glass ("The  
 Fabulist") 2701 N. Sepulveda  
 Blvd. Los Angeles (866)468-  
 3399 www.skirball.org 21+ /  
 \$8-\$15 / 8 p.m.

Friday, May 26

**Hanala Stadner** presents  
 and signs "My  
 Parents Went  
 Through the  
 Holocaust and All  
 I Got Was This  
 Lousy T-Shirt" Book Soup  
 8818 Sunset Blvd. West  
 Hollywood CA 9006 Free / 7  
 p.m.

Saturday, May 27

**Pasadena 17th Annual  
 Summer Fest**  
 at the Rose Bowl,  
 Memorial Day  
 weekend, May 27,  
 28 and 29 from 11:00 a.m.  
 to 9:00 p.m. 100 Rose Bowl  
 Drive, Pasadena / Free

Sunday, May 28

**UCLA Jazz Reggae Festival**  
 Intramural Field,  
 two day event May  
 28 Jazz Day May  
 29 Reggae Day 12  
 p.m. \$15 one Day/  
 \$25 Two Days 405 Hilgard  
 Avenue, Los Angeles, CA  
 90095 (310) 825-9912

Career/Transfer Center

**Wednesday, May 24**  
 Resumé Writing Workshop 1  
 p.m.  
**Thursday, May 25**  
 CSUN Rep 10 a.m. to 1p.m.  
 and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
 Undecided Majors Workshop  
 1 p.m.  
**Wednesday, May 31**  
 UCLA Financial Aid Rep 1:30  
 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
**Thursday, June 1**  
 CSULA rep 10 a.m. to 1p.m.  
 CSUN Rep 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
**All activities in Career/  
 Transfer Center(adm. 126)  
 818-9472646**

## No Talking During The Dance Concert

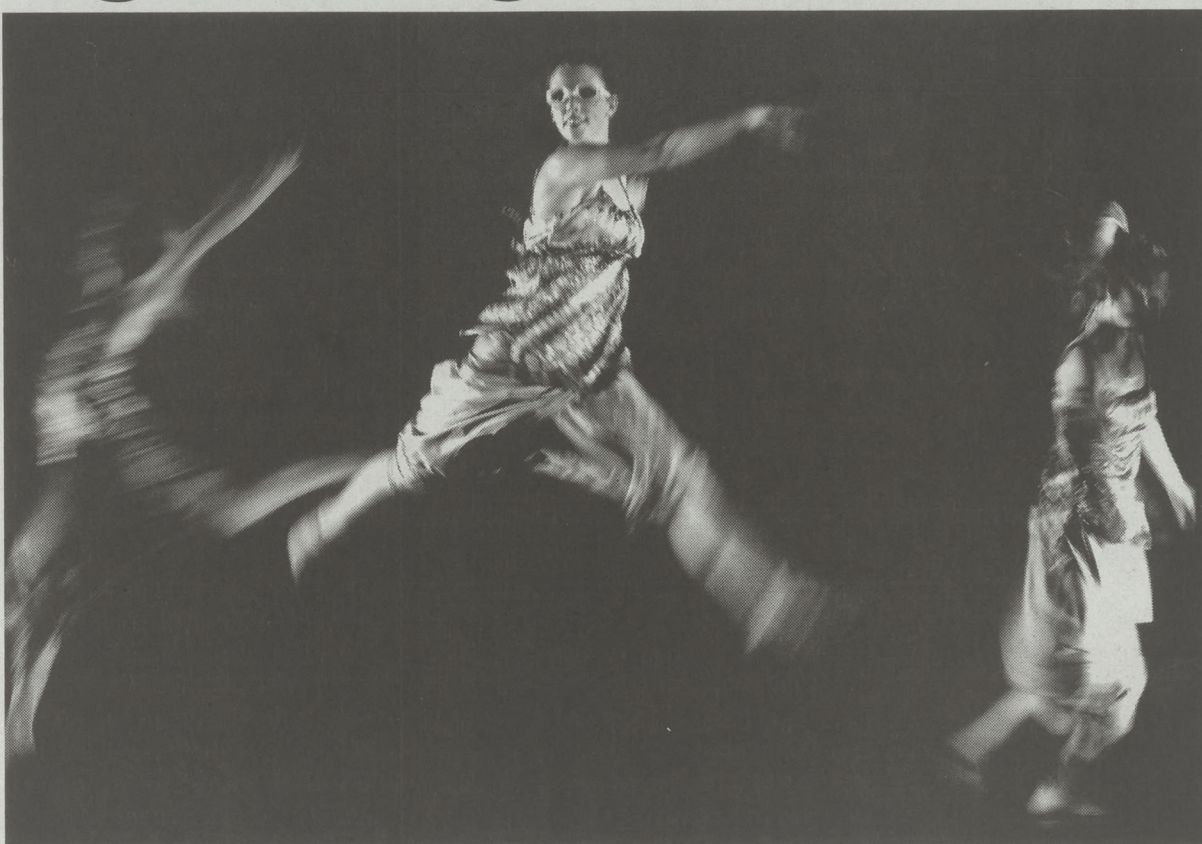
■ Valley dance program  
 hosts an artful and fun  
 10-number dance con-  
 cert.

By JESUS ESQUIVEL  
 VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

The lights drop to pitch then a group of performers are visible, bunched together holding a large white shroud of fabric across them from the chest down. They take turns to say things like, "Look at me" and "What are you talking about" while a projector flashes names of body parts on the cloth they are holding. They start speaking over one another, it doesn't make sense, then they all shout in harmony repeating, "No talking."

This was how the first dance number began at Saturday's performance of the Los Angeles Valley College 2006 Spring Dance Concert, "Body Language," in the Mainstage Theater. Sponsored by the Associated Student Union, Pop Dance and platinum donor Susan Larson, the event hosted many artful pieces as well as modern pop numbers everyone could enjoy.

After the group finished its chant the bass line dropped, the curtains opened and 21 dancers wowed and pleased as the bass was accompanied by the vocals of Freddy



**BODY LANGUAGE IN THE AIR** - Dancers leap in the air during "Rainforest" as part of the Spring 2006 Dance Concert, "Body Language," at the Mainstage Theater at Valley College.

Mercury in "Body Language." The performers were all over the stage jumping and doing groundwork as well. Dressed like characters in a bare-bones-budget rendition of a Gwen Stefani music video, they wore white derelict tutus, black pants with

patches that didn't match and gloves with the fingers cut off. On the side of the stage Billie Puyear signed all the vocals of the Queen song for the audience.

The forth number, "Romp," came on slow and rhythmic with

digital drums. It was eerie like a David Lynch film. The lights were near yellow and came from the side of the stage, adding drama to the music. All 10 dancers stood in a cluster facing the light, slowly raising their arms at the pace of the slow

requiem to point at the light, then at the audience and finally they put their fingers in their mouths like fishhooks.

One dancer broke forward from the mob and spoke, but there was no sound, only the movement of her lips and the exaggerated expressions of her face. The others behind her kept moving in slow strides as if underwater. Then two other dancers joined in the silent discourse directed at the audience. The silence was keeping in what was said at the beginning, "No talking."

After Romp the audience was treated to a hip hop urban dance number, "Hit the Floor" by Twista, which provided a chorus filled drum kit pumping beat for the dancers to groove and move with snappy steps complete with stank and minor booty shaking. Dressed in black tops and short white skirts the girls dropped when the lyrics said to and by the end the applause and woos poured from the audience.

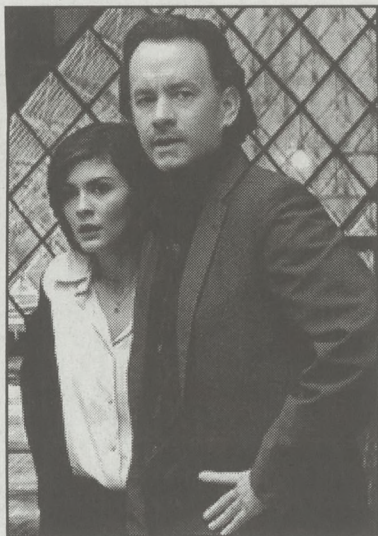
Every piece presented was masterful and evocative. The numbers ranged from thoughtful expressive art to good time commercial fun routines. Cameras were rolling that night, and a copy of the performance can be purchased by contacting the Valley Dance Program at (818) 947-2908.

## MOVIE REVIEW

## "Da Vinci" Decoded

**"The Da Vinci Code"**  
 Director: Ron Howard  
 Features: Tom Hanks and  
 Audrey Tautou

★★★ out of 5



COURTESY OF SONY PICTURES

By MARCO ELORREAGA  
 STAFF WRITER

For those who haven't read Dan Brown's novel, Ron Howard's "The Da Vinci Code" has its novelty in its ability to intrigue the viewer to want to read the book more than re-watch the movie. There must have been an element missing as it transferred from scribe to screen because what was all the fuss about?

Unfortunately for this movie, it takes itself too seriously and gives little room for fun like its patriotic hoo-ha sister-movie, "National Treasure." Unlike the Jerry Bruckheimer-Nicolas Cage packaged deal, which plays out like the smaller-stone pyramid at the bottom of the Pyramide Inversée, not too fancy and straight to the point, "Da Vinci" seems simple but is a very complex historical thriller that takes a while to get off the ground.

Like the novel, "Da Vinci" follows symbolologist extraordinaire Robert Langdon (Tom Hanks) who is visiting Paris to promote his new book when a greusome murder occurs in the Louvre Museum. As he becomes the prime suspect of the murder and persued by Captain Fache (Jean Reno), Langdon and cryptologist Sophie Neveu (Audrey Tautou) join forces to clear their names and discover an ancient secret hidden in Da Vinci's paintings that can change the balance of society before it's lost forever.

This slowly decoded thriller suffers because it contains an extreme amount of exposition about symbols, encrypted mes-

sages and history, which take away from the suspense and action of the film. Overall, the exposition is very interesting but out of place to the point that much of the first half of the movie feels like a museum exhibit and not the typical thriller that Howard has been known to be able to execute.

Howard seems to find his forté in the second half once the historical aspect is established. This is not the case for Hanks who can work magic, but can't work miracles. As he tries to resurrect Langdon's character from every angle of blandness, it is just a poorly-written part that made him look bored with his own lines. Even Hanks' lines before he meets Wilson in "Cast Away" were more capitivating, and that's saying a lot when he had none.

While Hanks is usually the go-to-guy for Howard, the match wasn't made in heaven this time around. Hanks isn't bad; he's just not as dynamic as his fellow costars, in paticular, Paul Bettany and Ian McKellen who play the tortured, angel-of-death Monk Silas and the Holy Grail fanatic, Sir Leah Teabing, respectively.

Bettany's role as Silas slithers down one's spine like Satan himself. His performance is haunting and engrosses the screen with horror, it's hard to imagine he once starred in "Wimbelton" next to Kirsten Dunst. Even so, Bettany's performance ranks with greats such as Anthony Hopkins' Hannibal Lector from "Silence of the Lambs" and Kevin Spacey's John Doe from "Se7en." McKellen continues to prove why he's one of the greatest actors of the late century. He is the epitome of a character actor that never flinches and he shows it in "Da Vinci" from his first off-screen lines to his silent-wail of an exit.

The film contains some disturbing images like self-flaggellation, but the most disturbing element is what the Catholic Church doesn't want seen: The portrayal of the certain order of cardinals known as the Opus Dei make the Church look like hypocritical sociopaths. And there's that whole Jesus thing, too.

At the end, the performances are some of the saving graces of the film, but this lackluster film does not fit the bill for a summer blockbuster. Join the phenomenon if there's nothing better to watch.

## FIRST PERSON

## North Hollywood's New Shape

■ Many new ventures are  
 shaking things up in the  
 town of North Hollywood.

By MARC HOWARD  
 STAFF WRITER

I wake to the sound of hammers slamming against nails, the grinding sound of the gears of construction machinery and the voices of construction workers shouting instructions to one another; I peek out the bedroom window and I can see them working on the two condominium complexes that have been rising from the ground for the past several months, as part of the additions to the NoHo Arts District, which is at the center of revitalization efforts aimed at the town of North Hollywood.

Indeed with 1,500 new apartment units, retail shops and a new high school, North Hollywood is undergoing massive change; the question is whether the change will be for the good or ill of its residents.

With the arrival of the North Hollywood Red Line subway station in 2000, and more recently the controversial Orange Line busway, North Hollywood is home to more than 3,800 Valley College students, more than any other town. North Hollywood has become a transit center around which developers, city officials and community leaders are trying to create a renaissance in the east San Fernando Valley neighborhood.

"This is a transportation hub

— the junction of two major transit lines in this region that connect the San Fernando Valley to the rest of the city," said MTA board member and Los Angeles Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky in a Daily News article.

Some of the neighborhood's more ambitious projects are NoHo Tower, which will be one of the tallest residential buildings in the Valley, and NoHo Commons, a \$200 million multi-use complex, that will include 739 apartment units, 152,000 square feet of retail space and 200,000 square feet of office space. Both projects are expected to be completed by late 2006.

Developers and city officials also have announced ambitious plans of giving the Valley Plaza shopping center a \$560 million face lift, creating a mega-mall, which would be the costliest retail development in the San Fernando Valley.

There is a downside to all of this development.

Many of the small businesses, mom and pop restaurants and boutique shops that give the area its unique flavor have seen a sharp increase in rents recently. Some have been forced to relocate while many others wonder whether the renovation of the area will leave them behind.

Gone is the quaint little Iliad Bookshop from its location at Vineland Avenue and Camarillo Boulevard. Dan Weinstein, the owner of the bookshop, said in a San Fernando Valley Business Journal article that he had his rent raised by 75 percent as soon as his lease was up

earlier this year.

Luckily, because of some property investments he has, Weinstein was able to stay in the neighborhood, acquiring a building at Chandler Boulevard and Calhoun Avenue to relocate his store.

Many other storeowners are not as fortunate.

"When we first got here there was a hip coffee shop, a body piercing place, a clothing store. It seemed a lot more happening," said one of the owners of Flash N Trash Rags on Lankershim Boulevard, Nikki B. "They're raising the rent because of the new development, but meanwhile business is going down."

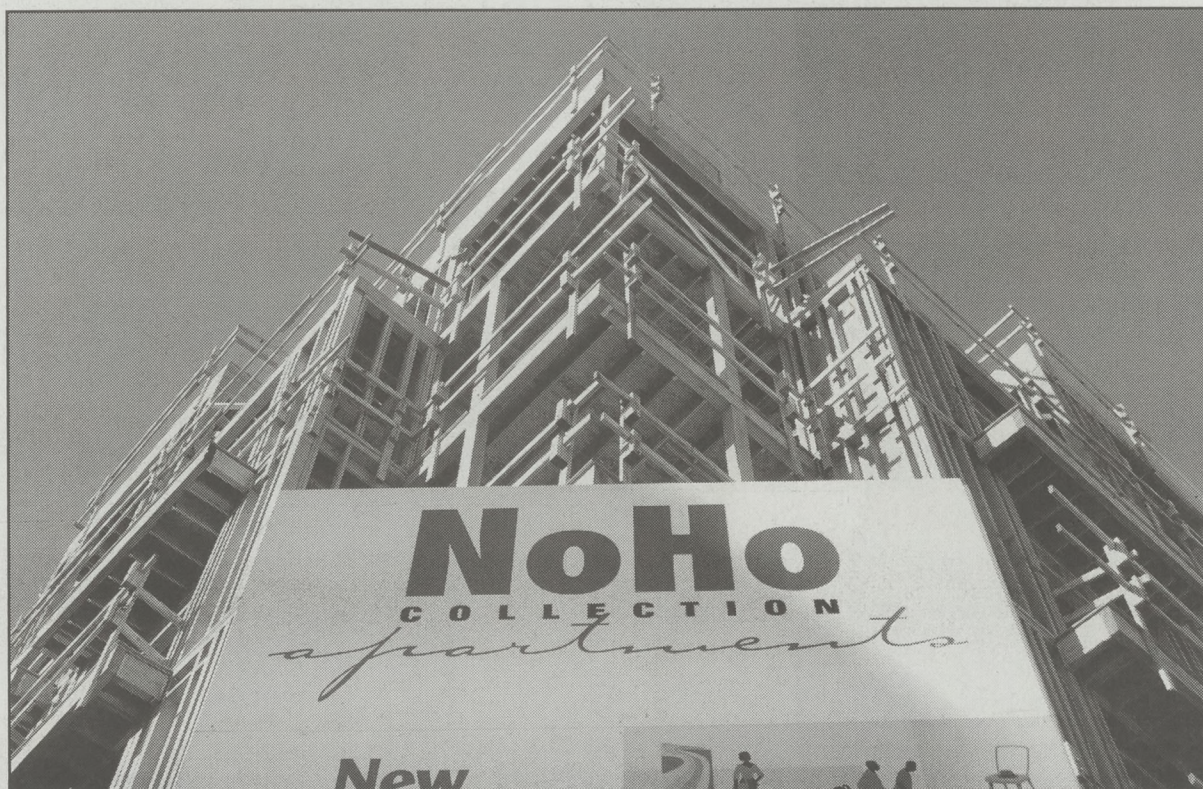
There's also the question of how the revitalization will affect the lower-income, long-time residents of NoHo.

Me for instance. I live in a rent-controlled building inhabited mostly by low-income families only yards away from the NoHo Commons complex.

The building is old, a bit run-down and is to the new condo complexes that are cropping up, what a 1987 Hyundai is to a brand new Lexus.

It sits on what is obviously becoming extremely valuable real estate and in the past couple of years I've seen buildings just like it demolished; just last week another building half a block away was knocked to the ground.

I wonder how much developers have offered to the owner's of my building. I wonder when they'll sell.



**MO' HOMES** - Mass transit availability and artistic boom of North Hollywood has created a frenzy of construction throughout the city.

DANIEL KANE / VALLEY STAR



# SPORTS

5

## VALLEY PEOPLE

# Palacios Pulls Double Duty

BY LAGINA PHILLIPS  
MANAGING EDITOR

Alma Palacios spends her time serving as an ASU commissioner and running around the campus – literally. The 22-year-old track and field athlete became ASU commissioner of athletics to support and promote the sport and entire athletics department.

In her last semester at Valley, Palacios is proud of her contributions to the department and Valley College as a whole.

“She has it all. I personally look up to her; she helps me push myself.”

- Antoinette Burton

“I didn’t know anything about the ASU until my coach [Yannick Allain] told me there was no representative for the athletics department and I should apply,” said Palacios. “And I wanted to do something extra for the school.”

Palacios, who most recently organized Valley’s Spring

Games to raise awareness for the department, excels in many sports, including soccer, but stands out in track and field.

“She has it all,” said friend and teammate Antoinette Burton. “I personally look up to her; she helps me push myself.”

Though she blazes trails in athletics, the psychology major plans to transfer to CSUN with hopes of becoming a criminal psychologist. After graduating from Fairfax High School, Palacios was the rare four-sport athlete, playing soccer and cross country in the fall, and softball and track and field in the spring.

Palacios credits her mother, Cristina Mirron, for her drive and determination, but her mother stays modest, saying Palacios is a self-starter and that she hopes her daughter’s hard work and diligence pays off in the future. “She’s excellent and it’s good for her to be so responsible now.”

As Palacios wraps up her term as athletics commissioner, she also ends her track career at Valley after having a good season. She competed in five events in the Western State Conference Preliminaries and qualified for the finals in two of them. She also qualified for the Southern California Preliminaries in the



MARIA LOW / VALLEY STAR

**WORKING OVERTIME** - Alma Palacios finishes her busy semester as athletics commissioner and her final year on Valley’s track and field team.

3,000-meter steeplechase.

“She has been a major asset not only for track but for the entire Valley athletic program,” said track coach Yannick Allain.

“We all look up to her and wish her the best while she moves on.”

Staff writer Daniel Srourian contributed to the story.

## FIRST PERSON

# Baseball Team Looks to the Future

BY STEVEN VRANAU  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Our loss to College of the Canyons in the final game of our season was a microcosm of a season filled with ups and downs.

We came into the game trying to avoid the sweep by College of the Canyons and things looked good after we scored six runs in the bottom half of the first inning. Canyons on the other hand saw things going a little bit differently as they pecked away with a run here and a run there, inning by inning, until they scored a 9 to 6 victory to complete the season sweep.

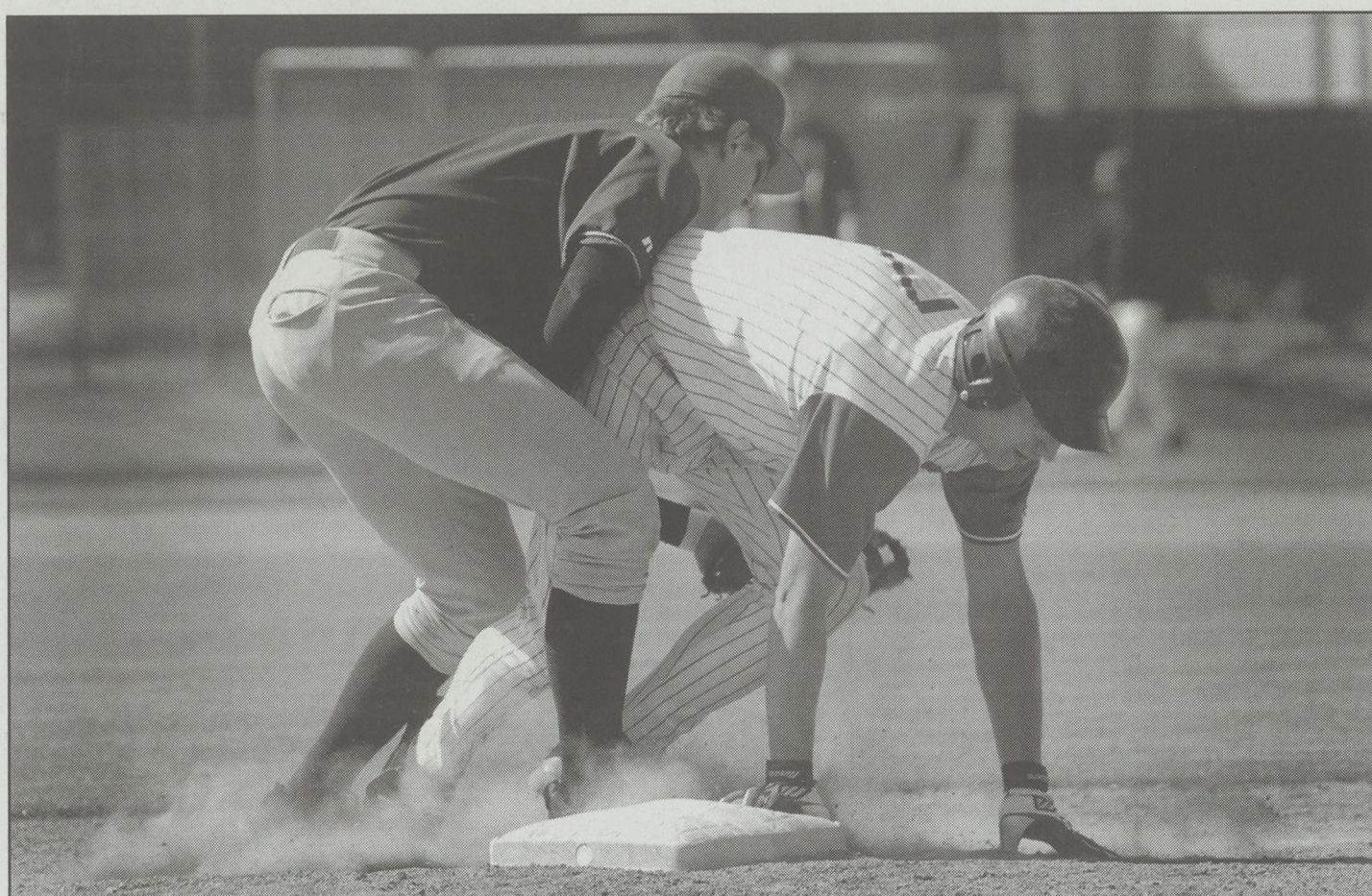
Honestly, that’s exactly how our season went this year, despite the fact that we were the conference defending champions. Maybe it was our inexperience or maybe the other conference opponents were out to dethrone us, in either case, it was a season of high hopes that went unfulfilled.

The only constant this year was our pitching staff, they usually kept us in every game and gave us a chance

to win. It was the other two aspects of the game, hitting and defense, that we were the most inconsistent. Maybe it was because most of the starting nine were freshman, straight out of high school and lacking college-baseball experience, but it definitely was not a lack of talent or effort. There is an old saying that there is no substitute for experience, and that couldn’t be anymore right on as a description of our shortcomings this year. That is also the reason for optimism in 2007, because the same inexperienced freshmen this year will be the more seasoned sophomores next year.

The losing season this year was a new experience for Head Coach Dave Mallas as well. It was his first losing season ever as a player or coach and something he doesn’t want to repeat again anytime soon. Thus, a more experienced group of players, a more determined coaching staff and not having that proverbial bulls eye on our backs as the defending champions, should all combine to help Valley contend for a conference title next year.

# A Look at Baseball Players Caught in the Moment



ARTAK AYVAZIAN / VALLEY STAR

**WATCH YOUR BACK** - A Pierce baserunner just avoids the tag in a close game against Valley College.



ARTAK AYVAZIAN / VALLEY STAR

**READY TO GO** - A Valley player is preparing to bat in Valley’s loss to Pierce College.



ARTAK AYVAZIAN / VALLEY STAR

**HEADS UP** - Valley College’s catcher looks for guidance while the ball is heading toward his head. Valley lost the game to Pierce College by a score of 7-5.

## WESTERN STATE CONFERENCE

# Monarchs WSC Wrap up

### Softball

The Monarch softball team ended the season in fourth place with a record of 12-9 in league and 19-21 overall.

They ended the season four games back of division winning Canyons in the Western State Conference Blue Division.

### Baseball

The Monarch baseball team ended their season in

fifth place in the Western State Conference South Division with a record of 10-14 in league and 16-27 overall. After winning the Western State Conference last year they finished nine games back of division winning Bakersfield College this season.

Team batting came in sixth out of the 13 teams in the division with a batting average of .278 and pitching

finished in ninth place with an ERA of 4.69.

First baseman and outfielder Leandro Dottavio ranked 25th in batting and first in triples. Valley also had three pitchers rank in the top 55 in pitching.

The Monarchs had five players make the All-Western State Conference South second team and three received honorable mention.



# GALLERY



**GOLDEN STROLL** - A big sister holds her brother's hand while their father, a Valley Star photographer takes yet another in a series of pictures of his children, this time walking along the Long Beach coast.  
ARTAK AYVAZIAN / VALLEY STAR

## BEST OF SPRING '06

LAYOUT BY MORRIS DE LA ROCA  
TEXT BY DANIEL KANE



**LIGHT MY FIRE** - This twin tower water fall outside of an office building on the corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Figueroa Street ignites every hour on the hour.  
DANIEL KANE / VALLEY STAR



**FREEDOM FLIGHT** - A patriotic sky diver swoops down on a beach in Oxnard sporting a large American flag.  
MARIA LOW / VALLEY STAR

Throughout this spring semester, the Valley Star staff photographers have taken a library of images; each person captured a variety of moments with their own unique aesthetic.

It is impossible to showcase the entirety of the work done, but these are some examples of photos previously unpublished that we thought you might enjoy.



**SERVIN' IT UP** - Vanessa Hernandez pitches up a storm for the Lady Monarchs softball team.  
DAVID ELIAS / VALLEY STAR



**ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAGS** - Walking down the streets of Downtown Los Angeles supporters of the "Day Without Immigrants" proudly wave flags of their native country and the U.S.  
ALEX FAYVIL / VALLEY STAR



**HOLD THAT POSE** - Karen Christensen photographs model Kristy-Lee Crane during a recent outing by Valley College photography students to the Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park.  
MORRIS DE LA ROCA / VALLEY STAR